

## Learning Adaptation and Greening Education in The Face of Climate Change and World Conflict

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### Abstract

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has undeniably come with many challenges and demands that require a lot of critical thinking, creativeness, ingenuity and innovative engagement with the ever mutating environment. The nature of the volatility and dynamism within the environment cannot be mistaken. It is apparent to the extent that progressive minds commit to developing an appropriate chemistry that ensures that the people and environment co-exist, notwithstanding the view that, 'it is man who needs the environment and not the other way: the environment does not need man.' Since the environment is continuously in motion making the variables mutate at terrific speeds and difficult to deal with man has to rise to a point where he applies himself so as to understand the environment as it evolves. In this vein Tofler (2016:24), aver that, '... those that will be illiterate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are not only these who cannot read and write, but these who cannot unlearn, learn and relearn.' These are thus, the components that make innovation possible even as the existence to problems threaten to cloud the chances for improving on the green and novel inventions that many scholars in Zimbabwe are producing to improve the survival and growth of their communities. This study thus revealed that there is a lot man has to do in order to sufficiently understand the environment. The study concludes that man should continuously engage in learning so as to come up with innovative ideas that seek to develop interventions that address societal challenges.

**Keywords:** Learning, adaptation, climate change, world conflict, greening

### Introduction

#### Learning and Greening the Environment to Adapt in the Context of Climate Change and World Conflict

A lot of creative engagement is required if the challenges characterising the world today should be tamed to extent that disasters and other challenges that man faces are convincingly mitigated. Once man fails to adapt to the winds of change within the environment a lot of problems will be faced. Some these problems may actually have devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of the people as well as contaminating or destroying the natural ecosystem. To this end Charles Darwin argues that, 'survival in any environment is not about intellect or strength but the ability to adapt' (Rauch and Regina, 2013) [17] the process of adaptation thus requires man to commit to unlearning and relearning the challenges so as to keep abreast with the world. Learning is thus the panacea to addressing the plethora of challenges that the world is known to face from time to time. This will undeniably help man to appreciate these challenges with the view of developing enduring interventions that will make life easy for man. Adapting to the realities of the world as it evolves has been defined by some scholars as the only chemistry that the worlds in order to deal with the challenges of the world (Meiboudi., Lahijanian., Shoberi., Jozi and Azizinezhad, 2016) [12].

Fostering resilience and stability is the best way for a country to enculture its members with the skills and spirit to fight even when it looks difficult (Peters, 2013) [15]. Ordinarily, man can easily give up or break unless efforts have been

pursued to prepare him through the learning of a culture of resilience. Understanding that an obstacle does not mean that the world has ended needs to be understood so the facets of perseverance are engrained in the hearts and minds of the people. To some scholars this described as the H matrix; which speaks to the head, heart and hands if creativeness should be sustainable (Somwaru, 2016, Fischer, 2019 [7] and Rauch and Regina, 2013) [17].

The challenges that communities around the world face require none but the same people to solve them. To this thinking, Bob Marley the most celebrated reggae singer once said 'none but ourselves, will set ourselves free.' This thinking also agrees with the views of ED Mnangagwa, the President of Zimbabwe who is believing in the reality that a country can only be built by its own citizens, through the brick by brick, stone upon stone mantra (Fischer, 2019) [7]. This however realise that a lot of effort will need to be applied, focus maintained and energies aligned. This focus and resolve promotes the culture that instigates and propagates innovations within individuals and groups. In this vein the government of Zimbabwe went all out to transform the education system from the traditional Education 3.0 [Research, teaching and community engagement] to the novel Education 5.0 which added two more pillars to the learning philosophy within institutions of higher learning namely innovation and industrialisation. The position has widely been accepted by all authorities and institutions of higher learning. The progress on this front has already started to be visible and

in the not so distant future Zimbabwe will be an industrial hub driven by innovation and industrial needs.

Koubi., Bernauer., Kalbhenn and Spilker (2012) <sup>[11]</sup> noted that once resources are availed to students in higher education it cannot be contested that they can engage in critical thinking which allows them to consider numerous options that challenge the status quo. Resultantly this would create enduring outcomes that will undeniably generate cutting edge solutions to their local and delicate challenges without having to borrow external intervention which in the majority of cases have provided piecemeal solutions that are not only inadequate but expensive too.

The locally produced solutions have been known to have the tried and tested capacity to sufficiently deal with the local challenges (Aarnio-Linnanvuori, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup>. Zimbabwe for a long time has been seen to depend mightily on production within the Agricultural Sector which is backed by rain fed interventions before climate change started showing its adverse effects. Zimbabwe was even at one time the breadbasket of Africa. Today it is also facing starvation within many of its communities a position that can be averted if appropriate greening innovations are harnessed. As much as the rains may not be enough much of the little rain that comes runs off to rivers and all the way to the oceans and seas yet with appropriate technologies this could be harnessed to promote irrigation

### **Benefits of Greening and Localising Interventions**

Once there is capacity to create local solutions to local problems the cost of importing foreign solutions that at times do not even work at times will be reduced. The commitment to ensure that the interventions work will also be very high. When this happens the dependence on such initiatives (BRI) by the Chinese, FOCAC by the Japanese for instance will be reduced (Aarnio-Linnanvuori, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup>. Tapping into the locally thought out interventions has undoubtedly a lot of potential to deal with local challenges in a more sustainable manner.

The more a country remains depended upon outside forces the more a country fails to socialise its people to have self-pride. This is very important for communities because once local talent is promoted, then the bond between citizens is enhanced. This bond promotes stability of a society. Once people believe in themselves they will learn to defend their heritage. To this thinking, Booker (2014:11) <sup>[5]</sup> once said, 'your salvation will not come from elsewhere, sink your bucket where you are.' By deduction, people need to utilise what they have yet more often than not people are not content or satisfied by what is locally available and possible. May at times people wait for a train that never comes' then decay or incapacity lack when they have a lot around them that could help team to change their positions. Outside help has always had problems related to conditionalities because: He who pays the pipe plays the tune.

### **Transformation of Education System.**

As the environment changes there is need for authorities to realign and reconfigure the education system so that it addresses the local needs and expectations. Education that does not provide solutions to societal problems is empty and unnecessary and needs to be overhauled completely (Professor Murwira, Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education: Zimbabwe, 2019). This overhaul would help to create new way of doing things, a new way of thinking and new way of looking at available resources in the face of

global challenges. Greening the curriculum means ensuring that learners are capable of taking on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges of global warming and climate change, social inequalities, unsuitable lifestyle and the urgent need to switch to a renewable energy based economy. This is undoubtedly a function of innovation and creativeness since it is man who needs the environment more, than the environment needing man. Indeed the environment can do without man, yet he cannot last a second without it (Reid, 2019) <sup>[18]</sup>.

In a bid to revamp the education system it must be accepted that greening education programmes is the way to deal with the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and expectations. This curriculum has shown so much potential in pursuit of growth of economies. As long as efforts are aggressively pursued then the world will be a better place for all and sundry. In this vein teachers need to be creative so as to sufficiently help the students to pursue their chosen careers that are pro environmental.

The need for a new green learning agenda needs no emphasis at all. It is now the in-thing for all communities that have a lens that appreciates the delicateness of the environment (Foo, 2013) <sup>[8]</sup>. Resultantly, greening the curriculum is a new way of educating and engaging children, youth and adults in climate solutions by unleashing the creativity of teachers and students to develop and implement climate action projects in their various environs.

Innovative ways of looking at life in a sustainable manner will promote ways of living, learning that have the potential to reduce carbon emissions, mitigate disasters by ensuring that appropriate knowledge, skills are engrained within the hearts and minds of citizens. This will help to promote their resolve in dealing with the societal attendant challenges. Without appropriate green skills and knowledge the world would fail to articulate the current problems that require novel interventions. In this vein Albert Einstein once argued that, we cannot solve today's problems by employing the same strategies that we were using when we created them (Ojala, 2019) <sup>[13]</sup>. 'This is why the 21<sup>st</sup> century is demanding compliant green skills and knowledge that come with greening the curriculum.

The manner education is run is thus expected to be constantly adapting and responding to the environmental dynamics. Education should always challenge the status quo so as to guarantee the meeting of current needs of the citizens without denying future generations of the same resources. Sustainability in the undertaking of whatever programmes should thus assume the pole position. There is no better way of achieving this outside education. Once education fails to meet current needs the country will witness instability in several dimensions, because people in their various sectors want 'bread and butter' issues to be addressed (Hsiang and Burke, 2014) <sup>[10]</sup>. If this fails they will raise a concern which will ultimately point to the inadequacies of the education system. Reluctantly, authorities should always evaluate their education system in terms of content, processes to ascertain to what extent is still relevant toward fulfilment of a country priorities.

The greening of education (Smith, 1997) <sup>[19]</sup> is thus the only tool that can be sure that education has the potential to provide learners with problem solving skills, critical thinking, team work, coping with uncertainty, empathy and negotiation. The need for man to understand the environment has always been there since time immemorial. Education is now seen as the only sure way to produce environmentally literate citizens.

Such literacy will guarantee survival of the communities into the future.

The Head, Heart and Hand matrix must have the potential to listen to nature in view of the fact the environment is now fragile (Ramsarup and Ward, 2017) <sup>[16]</sup>. If it continues on this path then it will not be in a position to sustain man and the other life that it carries. Once the ecosystem is affected then the whole world will be in turmoil, which position needs to be averted. The environmental problem is the most critical in the 21st century because once the environment is not right then nothing will be alright above and beneath the earth (Howell and Simon, 2019) <sup>[9]</sup>. Everything will be in disarray. This situation creates negative externalities that would not help to promote the development and sustainable growth of mankind. Educational efforts pursued must therefore be rigorous so that the effects of the environmental challenges are curtailed.

It must also be understood without any measure of doubt that the problems that the world is facing now are man induced. There is a lot man did to upset the naturalness of the operations and intricacies of the global environment through his ego, self-centeredness in industrialisation and other activities that have affected the natural ecosystem.

### Conclusions

This study concluded that:

- Education is an important pillar in shaping equality
- Education promotes innovation
- Green education is a critical pillar in improving the life and livelihood of citizens.
- Education processes and programmes should always adapt to the happenings with the environment

### Recommendation

The study recommends that:

- Efforts must be doubled to promote innovation.
- Resources must be committed to institutions of higher learning.
- World leaders must seize every opportunity to denounce activities by man that are harming the environment.
- Green education should be aggressively pursued.

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